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Guardian

Sept 5. 1913.

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PREACHER.

X

SIR—Your candid and very encouraging article of the 22nd ult. on this subject induces me to put before you a layman's point of view. It seems to me that we have some reason to rejoice not only in our clergy, but in the quality of their preaching. Persons who wander a good deal on the Continent in the summer months must be impressed by the comparatively large and devout congregations that assemble for the English Church Service, and, very much so, by the quality of the preaching which, if not often brilliant, is almost always earnest, sincere, and edifying. All the same, there is some sense of futility both in the lay and clerical mind. After a long lifetime of listening to sermons, the hearer has hardly a sense of progress or even of accumulation, and it is probably the sincere modesty of preachers which makes them willing to relegate the sermon to the lowest place in the office of public worship. The labour laid on the clergy seems enormous to an outsider. The task of preparing and delivering a hundred or a hundred and fifty short disconnected essays in a year—say at least a thousand in ten years—without the sense of progression in a given task, of accomplishing a continuous work, must be very laborious and a little sterilising, and the wonder is, not that sermons are not better and more inspiring, but that they keep up a remarkable intellectual and spiritual level. At the same time there is something wrong.

The non-Anglican Protestant bodies, though they may be no longer conscious of the fact, seem to be still tied and bound by that "lie of the soul" described as "imputed righteousness," which may belong to the Pauline philosophy, but not to the philosophy of our Lord as expressed in His own teaching. The Roman Church has developed what may be called a Petrine philosophy upon a single saying of our Lord's. The teaching of the Orthodox Church we need not inquire into just now; but the Anglican Church is definitely Christian in the sense that it accepts the "I say unto you" of our Lord as final and authoritative, and brings before us in ordered sequence the events of the Divine Life. I wonder, however, if we are in error in neglecting the "science of the proportion of things"? Following the lead of the Catholic Church to which we belong, do we confine our meditations too exclusively to the Incarnation, the Atonement, and what we call the moral teaching of the Gospels? Could not our Church make room for the teaching of the one consummate philosophy delivered by our Lord with curiously delicate and precise emphasis, with extraordinary emphasis

lions, with miracles which are themselves parables or object-lessons, with incessant endeavour, during the three years of His ministry? It would seem that our Lord's appeal is far more frequently intellectual than emotional or moral. He would have us discern, know, understand, all of which must be accomplished by intellectual effort—not the effort of analysis, but of spiritual insight. Would it be possible for our clergy to bring before us this progressive Christian teaching, with the help of some chronological harmony of the Gospels, requiring, for example, that their people should definitely study section after section of the Gospel history, week by week, and coming to church with their minds alert and their hearts inclined, should be ready for a sermon dealing with some point of special interest in the passage studied, so that the work of preacher and people should be definite and progressive? One sermon a week on these lines would still leave one or two sermons to deal with a set Lesson, Epistle, or Gospel, none of which could we do without. Of course, this is Utopian, but then Utopia is the only country towards which the traveller journeys.

I write with very sincere diffidence, knowing that there may be lions in the way which I do not suspect; but perhaps a correspondence in your columns will tend to show us the limitations and the possibilities. Meantime, I beg to remain, in consideration of those mercies which I do enjoy,

A GRATEFUL LAYMAN.

Bad Nauheim.

## Correspondence

(CONTINUED).

covered. His illustrative reply was that the sale of prismatic binoculars alone had (up to date) sufficed to defray all the salaries of his research men, not to mention many other well-known and most profitable discoveries in the same period, such as, for instance, the Abbé condenser, the manufacture of "Jena glass," and so on. On my return to England I told this story to the managing partner of one of the chief calico-printing firms in Manchester. He replied, "We are the only firm which employs a professional chemist and we have one only, but by a discovery of his we were kept busy all last winter when every other firm was slack." My friend added that he had urged his own experience upon other calico-printers, but a common reply was, "If a chemist was to come poking round our works, all the foremen would walk out of the place." Yet there was efficient scientific technical instruction for foremen at their doors. It was not the universities which were to blame, cramped for funds as they were.

I am Sir your obedient servant,

CLIFFORD ALBUTT.

Bonchurch Hotel.

### "THE FRUITS OF FALSE TEACHING."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Many of the tribe to which I belong—the Lookers-on—are grateful for your leading article under the above heading. We are not divisible into sheep and goats, and the men who have wounded us by striking and clamouring for their rights in our hour of peril are made of the same stuff as the others who are giving their lives for us. A prophet of our own instructs us to "Think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well"; we do "feel deep" in our British way—that is, we "don't let on," as the people say, and the war is *our* war just because we feel. This is as true of the men who are troubling us as of the heroes we glory in; and it is by what we call the merest chance that the fountain of feeling has not been stirred in them and that they too are not off to the war. But what a blessed thing it is for the nation and her Allies that skilled artisans have remained at home able to supply the armies with the material of war!

The trouble is that these home-keeping men do not recognize that we are under martial law, and that indiscipline is a punishable offence. You, Sir, have put your finger on the place: we all "feel deep," but we don't "think clear"; at any rate, not those of us who have given our minds to ruminating on "false teaching." Now these are very likely the most intelligent and best

mously all the offices both public and private of peace and war."

If boys and girls are taught, on narrow, individualistic lines, if they learn just what will pay in an examination and be of service to them in after life, they will get the habit of considering what will "pay" and will not learn to think sympathetically and therefore justly.

But Milton would have the pupil taught to perform his various offices skilfully. Here, I think, the sort of "Robinson Crusoe" life that Emile was to lead should help a man to be skilful for his own uses at any rate; and we are giving a good deal of attention to this line of education. We are offering all sorts of hand and eye training and the war is opening out splendid fields for practice. This is first-rate work, the more so because Milton's third essential, magnanimity, is taken into account. Here, however, is our great failure; we not only fail to be magnanimous as a generation but we do not realize what a great quality this is. If we want the right man or woman for any office, public or private, we need not look for experience, cleverness, organizing power, knowledge of detail in the candidate. What we want is magnanimity, a certain largeness of mind, and wideness of outlook, which will see the bearing of one thing upon another, the relation of every part to the whole and of the whole to the whole of human society. Magnanimity is the perfect fruit of character, the outcome of a wide knowledge of men and affairs, past and present, upon which insight and imagination have been brought to bear. It is the finest result of education, and Emile, who does not know what history means, can have none of it.

If we would have our boys and girls look at life with "larger, other eyes" we must see to it that they are saturated with history, poetry, all that literature which recognizes that the proper study of mankind is man, man in particular, ethics, metaphysics, poetry (by the way, Emile never seems to have heard of poetry!) and men in general, civics, economics, history—above all, history—without too much care to point the moral or adorn the tale. It is as examples, parallels, warnings strike himself, and not as they are pointed out to him, that history begins to be of service to the boy and he perceives that his country is of more consequence than himself, and that it is a better thing to help in the general progress than to advance himself. Let us educate our children to "perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war," and our men and women will not fail us in times of national crisis.

Yours faithfully,

AN ANXIOUS LOOKER-ON.



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The trouble is that these home-keeping men do not recognize that we are under martial law, and that indiscipline is a punishable offence. You, Sir, have put your finger on the place: we all "foot deep." But we don't "think close": at any rate, not those of us who have given our hearts to the cause. The fault is the nation's, and if they do not think clear the fault is the nation's, just as truly as the credit of the general heroism belongs to us all.

With all our zeal for education, we give false teaching in our schools, which the more ardent minds pick up and, later, proclaim from tub or platform. Much of this fallacious theory is derived indirectly from Rousseau—to whom we owe also very much that is good. Consider Émile at fifteen:—

Émile understands only the natural and purely physical sciences. He does not even know the name of history, or the meaning of metaphysics and ethics. He knows the essential relations between man and man. He does not readily generalize or conceive of abstractions. . . . He makes no attempt to learn the nature of things, but only such of their relations as concern himself. He estimates external things only by their relation to him; but this estimate is exact and positive, and in it fancies and conventionalities have no share. He values most those things that are most useful to him, and never deviating from this standard, is not influenced by general opinion. . . . Émile is industrious, temperate, patient, and full of courage. His imagination, never roused, does not exaggerate dangers. He feels few discomforts, and can bear pain with fortitude, because he has never learned to contend with fate. . . . In a word, Émile has every virtue, which affects himself. He considers himself independently of others and is satisfied when others do not think of himself at all. He exacts nothing from others and never thinks of owing anything to them. He is alone in human society and depends solely upon himself. . . . He has sound constitution, active limbs, a fair, unprejudiced mind, a heart free and without passions. Self-love, the first and most natural of all, has scarcely manifested itself at all.

We have him here with us in the twentieth century and know him well. He is an attractive person, but aloof—perhaps the more attractive because he is aloof, and because he is healthy, well-grown, vigorous, "a nice boy," we say, and we are glad that he is not a "bookworm." The only thing to be urged against the education that turns him out is—that he remains what he is now. As a man he is still aloof—from pictures and books, from social movements, from the making of history, from civic affairs. It is not that he is a bad fellow or consciously selfish, but his imagination is dormant. Comprehensive ideas do not appeal to him, though he is apt enough for partisan strife. But for most of us the war has changed all that. Like Émile, our boys and girls hardly know the name of history or the meaning of metaphysics and ethics. They are almost without general conceptions as to what is required by justice towards the persons, characters, opinions, and interest of others. It is probable that the wrong thinking and consequent wrong acting of well-meaning and kindly folk are the result of an education faulty in theory. Like Émile, again, we "know nothing of the moral relations between man and man."

Let us hark back to that great and sonorous saying of Milton's which claims as the end of education that the pupil should be enabled "to perform justly, skillfully, and magnani-

war," and our men and women will not fail us in times of national crisis.

Yours faithfully,  
AN ANXIOUS LOOKER-ON.

# SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS.

## "SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS."

### A LESSON FROM BOSTON

The Board of Education has received from the educational journals a generous meed of praise for the "Suggestions for the consideration of teachers and others concerned in the work of public elementary schools" which it has recently published. And, indeed, much of that praise, so far at least as it concerns the actual substance, the style and the genuine modesty of the "Suggestions," is richly deserved. If the praise had been withheld or misdirected it would have been a pleasant duty to do justice here to this latest achievement of the central authority in the sphere of educational theory. But since all, and rather more than all, the praise due has been given elsewhere, it only remains to discuss the general principles involved.

The Board has evidently assumed that, in the reconstruction of the system of education, the rôle of the specialist and the expert has, with others, been added to its rôle of arbitrator and paymaster. In a leading article some three weeks since it was observed in these columns that "the work upon which the energies of the central authority should be concentrated is not so much giving advice to imperfectly trained teachers as training them." It is this paramount duty of securing the right kind of training for teachers—training which shall raise to a higher power the capacity even of the born teacher, make sound teachers of the second rank out of men with little natural instinct for the work, and eliminate the totally unfit—it is this duty which Government has consistently neglected. For this sin of omission no meritorious compilation like the "Suggestions" can atone. Educational theory cannot be held to cover a multitude of sins in educational practice.

On these grounds, then, while it is impossible not to admire the completeness and the common sense of the "Suggestions," the best which it is expedient to say of the book is that it can do harm to no one, provided it be not taken as a substitute for a policy in regard to the training of teachers. For that policy the world of schools has still to wait. There is much excellent advice here ready to be assimilated and translated into practice (though some of it will be *diablement changé en route*) by teachers who have the requisite capacity. First attract and train your good teacher and then advise him if he needs or can tolerate your advice.

#### NATIONAL SONGS.

The chapter on the teaching of singing is one of the best in the book. The purpose of musical education is "to awaken the imagination and widen the capacity for emotion while subjecting its expression to artistic restraint," and the

Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," "Robinson Crusoe" with "Treasure Island," and books with things and the life of men. That there is a demand for books among the children who go to the primary schools here as elsewhere, is shown by the sacrifices that the parents have made in the past for the purchase of the reading books which the children use in school, but do not always possess as their own. Surely it is wasting one great agency of education to make no special provision for children in the public libraries.

#### THE WAY OF REFORM.

But, if effect is given to the other resolutions submitted to the Library Association, there may result a salutary change. It is suggested in the resolutions that the public librarian should keep in touch with the chief educational work in his area, and that conferences between teachers and librarians should be held from time to time. By way of securing this connection between the libraries and the schools "there should be some interchange of representation between the library and the education committees." That is sound advice which can be followed everywhere when vacancies arise in the ranks of the co-opted members of education committees. It is perhaps less important that members of the Education Committee should be on the management of the public libraries. A better plan still would be to place head masters and head mistresses of schools of every grade and type upon the library committees. With this suggestion for Mr. Carnegie, who is entitled to determine how and by whom the libraries which he endows shall be managed, may be concluded what are "reflections" in more senses than one.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST.

SIR,—I hope your suggestion in the *Morning Post* of August 8 will not be lost sight of. Conference and co-operation between parents and teachers already bears fruit, for there is no doubt that public opinion is being educated. At first sight a conference with "parents" appears as indefinite as a conference with "persons," for perhaps the greater number of adult persons are parents. But the existence of an organised body of parents (the Parents' National Educational Union), whose first object is "to assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of education in all its aspects," and which has always been happy in the co-operation of teachers, meets the case.

The title of "Imperial Education Association" is admirable, but perhaps, as the Union in question has been approached by other countries as well as by various parts of the Empire, the "International Union of Parents and Teachers" would be better. A society of the kind should do something towards promoting a philosophical and organised educational movement throughout the world, and should make, in the surest way, for peace and goodwill among nations.

As for the vexed question of a curriculum, that "the aim in most schools is to give a maximum of intellectual development during school life" I most heartily agree. It would be disastrous if discussion on this subject should lessen the public confidence in persons to whom the nation is profoundly indebted. "We have listened to the makers of men," was said in reference to the head masters of four of our great schools at a recent conference of the Parents' National Educational Union. This gives the point of view of parents; they send their sons and daughters to school because "it will be the making



not only admire the completeness and the sense of the "Suggestions," the best which is expedient to say of the book is that it can do harm to no one, provided it be not taken as a substitute for a policy in regard to the training of teachers. For that policy the world of schools has still to wait. There is much excellent advice here ready to be assimilated and translated into practice (though some of it will be *diablement changé en route*) by teachers who have the requisite capacity. First attract and train your good teacher and then advise him if he needs or can tolerate your advice.

#### NATIONAL SONGS.

The chapter on the teaching of singing is one of the best in the book. The purpose of musical education is "to awaken the imagination and widen the capacity for emotion while subjecting its expression to artistic restraint," and the result on the child's mind of good songs where lyrical poetry is associated with musical expression is "a growing sensitiveness to the rhythm and harmony which it is the office of music and, indeed, of all the rhythmic arts to express." It is a matter of experience that "the common enjoyment of singing brings about a relation between teacher and class conducive to the best understanding and consequently to the maintenance of discipline." In an appendix some guidance is given as to the songs which by their artistic merit and by their simplicity can afford enjoyment in common to the harassed teacher and the capricious child. It is sad to think how the national heritage of song has been neglected in the primary schools during the last half century, the songs which are "the expression in the idiom of the people of their joys and sorrows, their unaffected patriotism, their zest for sport and the simple pleasures of a country life."

#### TEXT-BOOKS OF GOVERNMENT MANUFACTURE.

Yet surely a little more practical guidance might be given to teachers in the choice of songs than the mere list of them in the appendix. It would be no startling innovation for the Board to embark on the publication of a national song-book of its own. In the eleventh chapter of the book under notice, many things are said about physical training which are not mere theory, because for physical training the Board has published a text-book which has been accepted everywhere upon its merits. Would it not be well to try the same experiment in the matter of music also? If it be true that "some of the folk-music of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales is unsuitable either in words or in compass for the use of schools," if "care must be taken in making a choice," it is scarcely effective guidance to tell the teachers that "many of the selections which are now available are suitable in every way." Which selections? The Board could not of course say "the best selection is published by Messrs. Vecchiolo and Son," for that way lies, if not corruption, at least the appearance of it, which is nearly as bad. So that the only way out of it is for the Board to publish its own song-book and to sell it at a reasonable price. It might be hard upon the publishers, but, as Sydney Smith said, "Barabbas was a publisher."

This question of the Government song-book, to which none can give a sounder answer than Dr. Somervell, raises the general question. Suggestions, as has been said, are no substitute for the instruction which goes by the name of "teachers' training." Now, it is a commonplace that the average teacher is under bondage to his school text-books. That is only so because he is not capable of working upon lines of his own. Surely, then, while the material remains as raw as it is now because pay and pension are alike inadequate, while the process of manufacture remains as slipshod as it must be till Government and the universities take the training colleges under their sole direction, it would be as well to secure that the teachers come under bondage, not to the text-books with which the "educational" publishers flood the market, but to text-books written by

admirable, but perhaps, as the Union in question has been approached by other countries as well as by various parts of the Empire, the "International Union of Parents and Teachers" would be better. A society of the kind should do something towards promoting a philosophical and organised educational movement throughout the world, and should make, in the surest way, for peace and goodwill among nations.

As for the vexed question of a curriculum, that "the aim in most schools is to give a maximum of intellectual development during school life" I most heartily agree. It would be disastrous if discussion on this subject should lessen the public confidence in persons to whom the nation is profoundly indebted. "We have listened to the makers of men," was said in reference to the head masters of four of our great schools at a recent conference of the Parents' National Educational Union. This gives the point of view of parents; they send their sons and daughters to school because "it will be the making of them." But it is not the curriculum that does the work, and probably teachers are at least as uneasy as parents concerning this question of curriculum. As Mr. Pass says, the design of the common curriculum is "to give a maximum of intellectual development." "I don't believe there's no such a person," said Betsy Prig in an audacious moment, and some of us think that "intellectual development" is in the case of "Mrs. Harris." Perhaps there is "no such a thing," and the intellectual development of the baby of three who has learned a language (as much as he needs of it) and has acquired immense knowledge about the behaviours and properties of things, is as complete as that of his father who is an Honours man. It is not intellectual development but intellectual equipment we want in the schools. The mind is a mill that will not grind sawdust, but will grind an indefinite quantity of sound and various grain. Though no sane parent would ask for alterations in the curriculum of an individual school, it is possible that parents and teachers in conference might evolve something helpful as to what is really, in spite of the experience of ages, the open question of the best curriculum.

This is not a veiled attack on a classical education; on the contrary, perhaps, we have nothing better to show in the way of "sweetness and light" than what we understand by the "Balliol man," for example; but many things go to the production of such an output.

Educationalists will be grateful to the *Morning Post* for the tone which it takes with regard to education. The Parents' Union hold that children of all classes (between the ages of six and fourteen or fifteen) should be taught on the same full and generous curriculum; and they have established this view by far-reaching and long-continued experiments. If this principle were generally adopted the status of teachers would take care of itself. The teacher who produced the most intelligent work in his school on such a curriculum would come to be recognised in some way not yet apparent more satisfactory than by "Registration."

As regards one other point, persons who care for education are indebted to the *Morning Post*. Middle-class schools are devoting themselves more and more to the production of skilled craftsmanship. It is well to know on Mr. Creesey's authority that the need for such craftsmanship is decreasing in "building, civil engineering, mining, and chemistry, while intelligent supervision is more and more difficult to get." The inference, no doubt, is that it is only "personal qualities" which tell, and that these depend upon "sound educational foundations."

Our "educational foundations" err in that they go on the principle of much mental discipline and little pabulum, as though a school should advertise the maximum of gymnastic exercise and the minimum of food.—Yours, &c.,  
CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

Bad Nauheim, August 22.



This question of the Government song-book, to which none can give a sounder answer than Dr. Somervell, raises the general question. Suggestions, as has been said, are no substitute for the instruction which goes by the name of "teachers' training." Now, it is a commonplace that the average teacher is under bondage to his not capable of working upon lines of his own. Surely, then, while the material remains as raw as it is now because pay and pension are alike inadequate, while the process of manufacture remains as slipshod as it must be till Government and the universities take the training colleges under their sole direction, it would be as well to secure that the teachers come under bondage, not to the text-books with which the "educational" publishers flood the market, but to text-books written by the good men whose services Government can always secure. A volume of suggestions for imperfectly trained teachers would be well enough as a companion to a series in which they were given such form and substance as a printed page can bestow. The suggestions have come first. The next step should be a series of text-books which will reform the practice, as the suggestions are meant to reform the theory, of the art of teaching young Britons.

#### SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES.

The Library Association has a "Committee on Public Education and Public Libraries." The resolutions submitted in its second report the other day at Cambridge embody some startling notions which are mere platitudes in other parts of the world, and notably in Boston, Mass. That the public librarian should keep in touch with the chief educational work in his area and the public library be recognised as forming part of the educational machinery, are principles recognised in Boston as nowhere else.

#### THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING-ROOM.

There is no special room for children to read in at the British Museum. Indeed, that vast building contains nothing specially adapted for their pleasure or their profit. They may gape at Egyptian mummies or Greco-Roman sculpture, but the print-room and the reading-room are closed to them. The nearest approach to a picture-book is provided for them in the illuminated MSS. under glass covers. To the reading-room "no person under twenty-one years of age is admissible, except under a special order from the trustees." It is to be presumed that books specially written for children are sent, like other books, to the Museum under the statute which levies copies of all publications for the use of the nation. What becomes of the children's books? Are they entered under their authors' names in the myriad-volume catalogue and consigned to shelves whence only a student with a gift for research can procure them by a ticket with his signature, the number of his seat, the date, the press mark, the name of author ("or other heading of work, as in catalogue"), the title of the work, and the date of publication, and then only when, owing to the early hour or the chance absence of fog, there is light enough by which to find the book?

#### THE CHILDREN'S READING-ROOM AT BOSTON.

In the Boston Public Library every child above a certain age is as much at home as in his play-room or school. There is a special room there which on Sundays at least is full of children, and where any child is always sure of welcome and of help. For over that room preside two of the most successful of all Boston's teachers, a man for the boys and a woman for the girls, both enthusiasts and students, like so many American teachers, of the structure and development of the child's mind. They consult the wishes of all boys and girls who come in, tell them where the good things are to be found, suggest courses of study, which "correlate" Blake's "Songs of Innocence" with

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